DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 409 984 PS 025 559

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TITLE Meeting the Needs of Low-Income Families through Family Child Care Professional Development and Consumer Education: 1996 Child Care Aware Conference Report. (Wheaton, Illinois, October 9-11, 1996).
PUB DATE Oct 96
NOTE 30p.
AVAILABLE FROM Child Care Aware, 2116 Campus Drive, SE, Rochester, MN 55904 ($10).
PUB TYPE Collected Works - Proceedings (021)
EDRS PRICE EDRS Price MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS *Consumer Education; *Day Care; Early Childhood Education; *Family Day Care; *Low Income Groups; *Professional Development; Public Opinion
IDENTIFIERS Caregiver Qualifications; *Day Care Quality; Day Care Registration; Day Care Selection; National Association for Family Child Care; Parent Caregiver Relationship

ABSTRACT

This document summarizes presentations from the 1996 Child Care Aware conference, which celebrated successful child care innovations, evaluated new strategies in family child care professional development and consumer education, and posed challenging issues for the future in these areas, especially as they relate to low-income families. Section 1, "Meeting the Needs of Low-Income Families," examines child care challenges resulting from welfare reform efforts, describes Child Care Aware projects which target services to low-income neighborhoods, presents tips for recruiting and training AmeriCorps workers, examines successful strategies for developing family child care in public housing, and considers training caregivers to serve low-income families with multiple stresses. Section 2, "Family Child Care Professional Development," outlines methods to connect with unregulated providers, discusses training models for providers and state registries enabling providers to communicate their credentials to parents, examines the impact of refinements in the National Association for Family Child Care's accreditation on program quality, describes some family child care training and professional development projects, and considers the growth of family child care associations. Part 3, "Consumer Education," examines parents' emotions in initial child care selection, discusses helping parents learn how to select good child care, presents issues related to affordability of care and parent-provider relationships, and outlines pilot projects designed to educate future and current parents on quality child care through public awareness and a media campaign. (KB)

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# *1996 Child Care Aware Conference Report*

## Meeting the Needs of Low-Income Families Through Family Child Care Professional Development and Consumer Education

*October 9 - 11, 1996*
*Cantigny Conference Center*
*Wheaton, Illinois*

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*A publication of:*

*Child Care Aware*
*2116 Campus Drive SE*
*Rochester, MN 55904*

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*The successes of Child Care Aware have been achieved through grants to 31 local organizations in 18 states conducting family child care professional development activities and to 36 projects in 21 states for consumer education.*

## Preface

Child Care Aware, formerly known as Family-to-Family, was founded in 1988 by Dayton Hudson Corporation (DHC), in cooperation with prominent national child care advocacy organizations. Founded with a grant from the Dayton Hudson Foundation and the Dayton Hudson Corporation, including its three operating divisions (Target, Mervyn's and The Department Store Division), Child Care Aware has successfully accomplished many of the objectives of its original mission, which included pioneering and supporting the professional development and training of family child care providers as well as educating parents to recognize and choose good child care.

Child Care Aware today is a joint venture of the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (NACCRRA), the Child Care Action Campaign (CCAC) and the National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC). The successes of Child Care Aware have been achieved through grants to 31 local organizations in 18 states conducting family child care professional development activities and to 36 projects in 21 states for consumer education. These successful projects have developed a local infrastructure and replicable models for professional development of family child caregivers and for consumer education.

**Since 1988 Child Care Aware has:**

- Initiated development of training courses of 15 hours or more for 17,000 family child care providers in 40 local communities, improving the quality of care for over 85,000 children.
- Prompted the *1995 Family Child Care Training Study* conducted by the Families and Work Institute, which found that following training, children were more secure with their providers and more engaged in activities, and overall quality in family child care improved.
- Supported more than 700 family child care providers in achieving accreditation by the National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC), the highest standard for family child care quality in the country. The providers supported by Child Care Aware account for half of all accredited child care providers in the United States.
- Conducted parent focus groups in nine cities to better understand parents' values, attitudes and concerns about child care. Results were used to craft messages and identify communication strategies during Child Care Aware's national consumer awareness campaign launched in 1992.
- Established a national, toll-free parent information hotline linking parents with their local child care resource and referral agencies, and disseminating information about how to recognize and choose quality child care.
- Distributed 7.25 million information-packed brochures directly to parents through the toll-free hotline; through Dayton Hudson Corporation retail stores, child care resource and referral agencies, community organizations, hospitals, churches and schools; and at public events.
- Awarded Consumer Education Grants totaling over $360,000 for pilot programs in 21 states designed for replication by community-based and statewide child care advocacy organizations.
- Contributed to articles on choosing good child care in *USA Today, Parents* magazine, *Family Circle, Working Mother, Business Week, Fortune* and *The Wall Street Journal*, and to segments on ABC, CBS and NBC network news programs.

## Conference Goals

The goals of the conference were to celebrate the successful innovations and evaluate new strategies in family child care professional development and consumer education; and to pose cutting-edge or challenging issues for the future in family child care professional development and consumer education, particularly as they affect low-income families.

## Focus of the conference

The 1996 conference provided an opportunity for professionals to thoughtfully consider the experiences of Child Care Aware communities and the innovations in the fields of family child care professional development and consumer education.

**1. Meeting the Needs of Low-Income Families** The conferees particularly explored child care's role in meeting the needs of low-income families, as well as the opportunity to prepare low-income parents for entry into child care careers.

**2. Family Child Care Professional Development** The conference looked at the professional development of family child care individuals and associations, and how child care professionals and agencies could promote and support that development.

**3. Consumer Education** Child Care Aware consumer research has demonstrated that professionals need to understand parents' values in order to communicate effectively with them about good quality child care. Conferees examined findings from consumer research and education projects that reached out to parents at different stages of child care usage, and in a variety of ways.

***A great conference– uniformly high quality, very thought provoking. Thank you for the leadership you have "grown".***
*– Conference Participant*

# I. Meeting the Child Care Needs of Low-Income Families

## Looking into the future for low-income families

Children and families today, particularly those in low-income communities, face multiple stresses. Child care groups are struggling to understand and meet those needs. In her keynote address, Michele Piel, manager, Child Care Development Division, Illinois Department of Public Aid, focused on the uncertainties of welfare reform and its impact on the child care needs of families. The most significant changes are that welfare families face a five-year lifetime limit for cash assistance and that within two years of receiving assistance, a parent must be at work.

*The most significant changes are that welfare families face a five-year lifetime limit for cash assistance and that within two years of receiving assistance, a parent must be at work.*

Under the new welfare reform law, women with children under age six cannot be sanctioned for not working if they don't have "appropriate" child care, but the five-year clock continues to tick. Child care groups must take the time now to plan for 1998, when women who are currently receiving cash assistance will have to be at work and will be seeking child care. Since parents with children under six will be exempted only if they are unable to find "appropriate child care close to home or work," the immediate task is to ask how the state will interpret "appropriate" and "close to home or work." According to the Government Accounting Office, 45 percent of all families, regardless of income, use relatives or neighbors for child care. As Piel remarked, "Will it count as an exemption if, for example, a mother doesn't want to leave her child with an alcoholic relative?"

## Child care challenges in welfare reform:

- The kinds of jobs people will get will be at the very lowest income level. A woman earning $7 per hour for 30 hours and paying for the lowest-cost child care at $9-10 per day would spend 25 percent of her income on child care. There will not be much of a career path in these jobs; if mothers want to move up the pay ladder, they will need to combine school with work and be away from their children even more.
- Work schedules will be erratic. Traditional 9-to-5 child care simply won't work. In order to accommodate part-time jobs, changing shifts, and evening and weekend work hours, parents will need to rely on the availability of neighbors, relatives and friends for child care. Such a patchwork of different caregivers will not provide children with stability or consistency in their child care setting.
- Deregulation and the idea that "something is better than nothing" has resulted in the current housing crisis in New York. Ms. Piel drew a parallel between that situation and what could happen in child care.
- It is difficult to imagine how very young mothers can meet basic needs, not to mention child care and parenting. Are some being pushed into the workforce too fast? Are they being set up for failure?

*"You cannot have welfare reform without child care."*
*Yasmina Vinci*
*National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies*

## Welfare reform won't work without child care

Michele Piel challenged the field to make welfare reform work for families. During the welfare reform debate, child care resource and referral agencies in collaboration with other advocates said very clearly that both job training and child care are needed to make welfare reform work. Yasmina Vinci, Executive Director, National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies remarked: "You cannot have welfare reform without child care."

According to Piel, if we say that by 2002 fifty percent of welfare recipients must work, then we must provide child care. At this point no one knows what it would cost to provide child care to all low-income working families. We do know that people are going to get jobs, but those jobs may be temporary and without benefits. Such jobs will make it difficult to maintain family life. If all low-income parents with school age children have to go to work, how will their children be cared for? Who will be left in their neighborhoods to care for them?

*Given the nature of the available jobs, parents will be seeking child care part time and for odd hours.*

Child care professionals need to look at the decisions parents make about informal care. Traditionally, parents select informal care to begin with, and as their need for more stable child care grows, they seek more formal settings. Parents who initially use relative care may not be comfortable changing those arrangements. Decisions to pay relatives may be also related to bringing additional resources to the family. Piel cited the example of a grandmother who needs the subsidy paid by providing child care in order to move to better housing which will benefit the entire family. Low-income relatives and neighbors may need additional resources in order to provide good child care and earn a real income themselves. The challenge will be to provide funding for parents to pay for child care and outside resources to those family child care providers to ensure quality child care.

## Welfare reform raises difficult issues

With the advent of welfare reform several issues have emerged. One issue is that **low-income children, who are the most vulnerable, will be most affected by poor quality child care.** And research has demonstrated that the majority of child care is mediocre at best. (*The Cost, Quality and Child Outcomes Study*, 1995 and *The Study of Children in Family Child Care and Relative Care*, 1994) The Family-to-Family child care training and professional development efforts have put models and resources in place to improve quality and have demonstrated that core training does improve child care. (*The Family Child Care Training Study*, 1995) The State of Michigan for example, evaluated statewide Family-to-Family training and found consistent improvements in child care environments, demonstrated by increased ratings on the Harms scale. (Margaret Crawley, Michigan 4C Association, East Lansing, Michigan) Along with continued efforts toward quality improvement, Child Care Aware must now create a climate in the child care marketplace in which parents recognize the value of training and demand good quality child care.

Another issue is the concern that **under some state policies, parents with the fewest resources will be forced to choose child care providers who also have the fewest resources.** Given the nature of the available jobs, parents will be seeking child care part time and for odd hours. Parents without reliable transportation will be seeking care in their neighborhoods, among friends and relatives who are also low-income, and short of resources to provide child care. Several panels addressed the need for outreach, training and support for family child care providers in low-income neighborhoods and rural areas. How can we make child care a career path which improves the lives of low-income providers? Is it possible to develop apprenticeship programs? What additional supports and resources do low-income child care providers need?

## Welfare Reform Strategies

- The message to policy-makers should be "Child care must be in place in order for parents to work."
- Old divisions and "pots" of money for child care were removed with the block grants. There is no reason why we should take the subsidized child care system apart again.
- Cost out the child care and don't be afraid to ask states to put more money into their budgets. Advocate for funds to support people going to both work and school.
- Advocate to provide child care for all children under a certain income level. If everyone gets child care, then everyone will have to pay a fee based on a sensible percentage of income (10 to 20 percent) that changes as income goes up.
- CCR&Rs and other agencies working with low-income families must be trained to refer families to charitable settings when cash assistance is cut.

*"If you've come here to help me you can go home. If you see my struggle as a part of your struggle then maybe we can work together."*

## Child care supports low-income families in two ways

First, it is a support service for families. Second, for some parents, it can be a career opportunity. Child Care Aware projects have developed services targeted to low-income neighborhoods, so that higher quality child care is available to the community. Training programs have been developed in public housing, and with refugee populations and welfare recipients, so that they can become family child care providers or work in child care centers on their paths to self-sufficiency.

## Child care professionals must approach families with respect

**Dr. Alice Walker Duff** shared her philosophical approach to her work at **Crystal Stairs in Los Angeles,** recalling the saying, "If you've come here to help me you can go home. If you see my struggle as a part of your struggle then maybe we can work together." Duff challenged the audience to deepen their understanding of themselves and the lives of poor people, suggesting that when you can appreciate the experience of those you would help, you tend to be better able to help. When you get in touch with your personal struggles, you can better appreciate the challenges others are facing and understand how you are connected to them.

*Family child care providers, often the only adults at home in stressed neighborhoods, play a special role in low-income community life.*
*Alison Lutton*
*Delaware Valley AEYC Project*

## Successful approaches

Family child care providers, often the only adults at home in stressed neighborhoods, play a special role in low-income community life, according to **Alison Lutton, Delaware Valley AEYC project, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.** Several panelists demonstrated successful approaches that are grounded in principles of respect. In Philadelphia, African American family child care providers in low-income communities have become consumer educators in an accreditation and leadership development program that is based on the principle that good child care and a good provider are a support to low-income parents. Parents and providers are both working to improve family life. Lutton rejects the notion that family child care plays a special role because it is "cheaper" child care. Rather, family child care is a valuable community resource. Lutton, a family child care provider for over 10 years, said "In the afternoons I stand on my porch and watch to make sure the kids get safely to their houses from school."

*"Get rid of your myths and go to the source and find out before going to 'help'."*
*Denise Gorny*
*North Coast Opportunities, Inc.*

**Denise Gorny** described how **North Coast Opportunities, Inc.** in **Northern California** has built an impressive program of outreach to isolated rural Indian and Hispanic communities. Because mistrust, fear, and transportation barriers keep people from seeking services, AmeriCorps workers were recruited to help make connections. These outreach workers have been trained to understand and respect family systems and to spend time with people. AmeriCorps workers "hang out" in communities to build trust and to learn what people might want from them. As people began to trust the AmeriCorps staff, they request services. AmeriCorps workers have taught CPR and first aid to teen parents; provided one on one support to grandparents who are helping to raise their grandchildren; translated forms; taught ballet folklorico; and attended pow wows, Cinco de Mayo celebrations, health fairs, and other community events. "This is what we learned," said Gorny: "Get rid of your myths and go to the source and find out before going to 'help'."

## Tips for Recruiting and Training AmeriCorps Outreach Workers

### What to look for in recruiting

- Individuals who see a connection between AmeriCorps and their future, perhaps to finish school.
- Interest or experience in working with culturally diverse and low-income families.
- Basic human relations skills.
- Experience in working with kids or families and/or special talents.
- Flexible, non-rigid individuals with a "go for it, stick to it" attitude.
- Weigh youth versus maturity and ability to juggle long hours, evening and weekend travel, training and community projects.

### Training components

- Intensive training for two weeks, followed by immersion in communities and weekly training for two months.
- Introductions to agencies, including the "good, the bad, and the ugly" child care programs.
- Formal training and skill development in communicating with parents and providers, child care as a business, child care health and safety, CPR, the American Disabilities Act and child care, and working with school-age kids.
- Extensive training in the use of community and child care resources.

### Making connections in diverse communities

- Demystify cultural differences for staff. Raise their comfort level.
- Accompany workers on initial visits to communities.
- Present overviews of cultures and how programs and services can work within that population.
- Present multicultural resources, including curriculum and videos on child care and diversity.
- Encourage workers to be present at community gatherings and to be patient until people become comfortable seeing them there.
- Conduct outreach in connection with respected individuals or organizations.

Courtesy of North Coast Opportunities, Inc., Ukiah, California

## Snapshots
## Outreach and Services to Low-income Families

**YMCA Childcare Resource Service, San Diego, California:** This successful mentoring and accrediting program found a home in an enterprise community, where 30 to 50 percent of the residents are below poverty and speak many different languages. The rationale for the enterprise community is that family child care providers needed business skills and qualifications in order to stay in business.

**Michigan 4C Association, State of Michigan:** A statewide coalition of funders is providing advanced training for center and family child care providers to care for children with multiple problems, often related to poverty. It became clear that in addition to training, providers need technical assistance and guidance in order to help stressed families.

**Delaware Valley AEYC, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania:** To complement its accreditation project, the organization trained low-income African American family child care providers to become consumer educators. Parents thus learn about quality child care from accredited providers. It is a motivation for family child care providers to see themselves as educators. An added bonus is that referrals are coming back to those providers.

**Children's Service Society of Utah, Salt Lake City, Utah:** The project conducted a successful family child care recruitment and retention campaign in a downtown low-income area, in spite of some problems with housing projects. For the Hispanic families in that community, they conducted Family-to-Family training in Spanish. They originally wrote the plan for 15 participants, but ended up with 23 providers who can care for 96 children.

**North Coast Opportunities, Inc., Ukiah, California:** In order to provide services in two rural counties of 6,000 square miles with lake and mountain barriers and isolated populations, the project coordinated local funding to get AmeriCorps outreach workers. Outreach to Indians, Hispanics, and families without phones or transportation has been successful because the AmeriCorps staff have been extensively trained in community development and have taken the time to become accepted by rural communities.

*In Seattle, a provider trained within a housing authority is now doing child care in the suburbs. Transportation assistance and Family-to-Family training have helped her to become a successful family child care provider and achieve self-reliance.*

## Family child care as a path to self-reliance

Low-income parents can develop a career in child care as family child care providers. Successful projects have offered information and support so that caregivers can see a career path more clearly and have access to services such as training and transportation. For those who live in public housing, family child care presents a particular dilemma because child care earnings will eventually decrease a provider's subsidy to the extent that she may lose public housing. One solution is to maintain several "model" apartments in public housing which are reserved for child care providers and those in training. This will help meet dual goals of providing quality child care in public housing developments and helping low-income providers develop a child care career. These same providers also need training and supports such as transportation so that they may continue providing child care services once they move to non-subsidized housing. In Seattle, a provider trained within a housing authority is now doing child care in the suburbs. Transportation assistance and Family-to-Family training have helped her to become a successful family child care provider and achieve self-reliance.

## SUCCESSFUL STRATEGIES FOR DEVELOPING FAMILY CHILD CARE IN PUBLIC HOUSING

**Allison May-Schlagheck of YW/Child Care Connections in Toledo, Ohio** developed family child care in public housing with the support of the housing authority, employers of residents who needed child care, the Child and Adult Care Food Program, a JOBS training program, the Department of Human Services which pays subsidies for child care, and a small business development program. At the first graduation, one caregiver cried because it was the first time she had completed anything. The six graduates are positive, successful, and have full enrollment in their family child care homes. Allison suggests the following:

1. Build a relationship with tenant council. They will do battle if necessary with the housing authority.
2. Explore small business development programs.
3. Bring department of human services staff into classes to clarify how benefits will be affected by earned income.
4. Start early to get background checks on adults.
5. If possible, locate near a child care center to use as a training setting. Make sure that classes are held in a location residents consider safe.
6. It takes a good relationship with the Housing Authority to meet the challenges of repairs, need for exterminators, etc.
7. Solicit vouchers for phones, and start-up grants for cribs, etc.
8. If possible, locate program near police sub-station.
9. Build in support so that as caregivers become successful and have to leave subsidized housing they can make it on their own.
10. Explore idea of keeping several units set up for family child care; and work with new residents for three to four months to get them trained for child care.

*At the first graduation, one caregiver cried because it was the first time she had completed anything.*

## Training caregivers to serve low-income families with multiple stresses

In Michigan a core curriculum has been taught across the state, tailored for individual communities. **Margaret Crawley, Michigan 4C Association,** reported that caregivers requested additional training in order to work with children and families experiencing multiple problems and stresses. The Mott Foundation responded with a grant to enhance the core curriculum with a second level of advanced training to help providers develop support for families. A particular focus of the project is to explore available community resources, particularly for training on feelings and conflict resolution. Many parents have not left their child before, and the caregivers have to deal with difficult separation problems. The advanced training went very well, helping providers to build empathy for low-income families with multiple problems, such as odd hours, multiple jobs, and single parenting. Providers identified with parents because their families experience similar stresses, such as the need for evening care.

# II. Family Child Care Professional Development

## Reaching out to unregulated providers

Twenty-five states do not mandate regulated care unless a provider cares for more than three children. With the emphasis on parental choice in welfare reform, many parents will be using exempt care. The Child Care Law Center has just published a new guide on regulatory exempt family child care in the context of publicly subsidized child care. **Deborah Eaton, President, NAFCC,** led a discussion on the challenges presented in working with parents and providers to help them see the value of regulation and training. Conferees expressed concern that low-income families expect very little from child care. To help parents understand the importance of child care training, Crystal Stairs staff asks parents if there is something they do better because they had training in their jobs. The **California Child Care Improvement Project** targeted "underground" child care providers to serve the Spanish speaking population and to increase the numbers of infant/toddler providers. The group brainstormed outreach strategies.

*To help parents understand the importance of child care training, Crystal Stairs staff asks parents if there is something they do better because they had training in their jobs.*

### CONNECTING WITH UNREGULATED PROVIDERS

- Use the language(s) of the community.
- Ask a provider to bring a friend to any meeting or training.
- Ask family child care association members to identify other caregivers.
- Develop neighborhood support groups of providers.
- Use church bulletins.
- Ask public school secretaries for names of people doing child care.
- Post brochures at laundromats.
- Distribute resource boxes with recruitment materials at cleaners, after-school programs, libraries, county extension offices, and community colleges.
- Avoid slick brochures; make publicity neighborhood-friendly.

## Going beyond the basics in training

Family-to-Family training, now being replicated in many states, has demonstrated the value of meaningful training for family child care providers. The infrastructure for training is now in place so that community colleges, family child care associations, CCR&R agencies, AEYC and other training entities are able to provide community-based training. We have learned that once caregivers become involved in training, they tend to want more. As a result, projects have developed intermediate and advanced training. Many projects have developed mentoring projects around training and accreditation.

**The Caring Partnership, Bellevue, Washington,** has developed a particularly ambitious two-year model, in which a group of experienced caregivers take a course together once a week from 7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. during the school year. They also meet over the first summer to support one another as they go through NAFCC accreditation as a class. During the second year, a course prepares them to attain the CDA and complete their CDA over the summer. At the end of two years, they have

completed over 200 hours of training, attained NAFCC accreditation and their CDA. The program offers several payment options, including credit cards, which one third of the participants used to pay the $1300 program cost. Students may pay an extra $150 per quarter for three college credits through local community colleges or a local branch of Pacific Oaks College. Response from providers for this Family Child Care Professional Certificate Program has been enthusiastic, with 60 people registering to fill two classes.

**FAMILY CHILD CARE PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATE PROGRAM**
**The Caring Partnership, Child Care Resources,**
**Bellevue, Washington**

**CURRICULUM**

| YEAR I | YEAR II |
|---|---|
| FALL QUARTER - "Second Helping" (Windflower Enterprises Course) | FALL QUARTER - "Caring for Children in Family Child Care" CDA Modules |
| WINTER QUARTER - "The Creative Curriculum for Family Child Care" | WINTER QUARTER - "Caring for Children in Family Child Care" CDA Modules |
| SPRING QUARTER - "Teaching and Leading Children" | SPRING QUARTER - "Caring for Children in Family Child Care" CDA Modules |
| SUMMER QUARTER - Completion of NAFCC Accreditation | SUMMER QUARTER - Completion, CDA Credential and Graduation |

**PROGRAM BUDGET**

The model, based on 20 students will generate income with more than 20 students per class. This model does not include funding for staff coordination or facility rental. Instructors are experienced family child care providers, trained to deliver the program.

| ITEM | EXPENSES PER CLASS |
|---|---|
| CDA fees | $6500 |
| Accreditation fees | 4500 |
| Processing fees | 800 |
| Instructor fees @ $30 per hour | |
| Quarter 1 | $1000 |
| Quarter 2 | 1000 |
| Quarter 3 | 1000 |
| Quarter 4 | 1000 |
| Quarter 5 | 1000 |
| Quarter 6 | 1000 |
| Book Fees | |
| Quarter 1 | 600 |
| Quarter 2 | 800 |
| Quarter 3 | 600 |
| Quarters 4,5,6 | 1600 |
| Photocopying | 1600 |
| Postage/Phone | 500 |
| Subtotal | 23500 |
| Administration | 23500 |
| **TOTAL EXPENSES** | **$25850** |
| **TOTAL INCOME** | **$26000** |
| **STUDENT COST** | **$1300** |
| | **(based on 20 students)** |

*Response from providers for this Family Child Care Professional Certificate Program has been enthusiastic, with 60 people registering to fill two classes.*

## Parents seek more information while providers seek recognition

**Action for Children in Columbus, Ohio** faced two challenges that they have addressed with a highly effective vehicle. One challenge was that parents were requesting more information about providers. The second was that providers who had completed Family-to-Family training wanted parents to know what they had accomplished. In answer to both sets of needs the agency developed a four-tier system which indicates the provider's level of professional development. All 700 family child care providers in the Action for Children registry have provided their credentials which are communicated to parents to help them make a more informed choice.

At **Child Care Resources, Bellevue, Washington,** a similar model has been initiated to relate the credentials of home providers and centers using a four-level scale, with the highest level being accreditation. Staff in both agencies had many hours of discussion to refine procedures and communications with parents. The challenge has been to carefully explain the system during counseling and in a well-written piece that is mailed to parents. Although Action for Children has developed a database in Paradox that will automatically translate providers' credentials into tiers, conferees mentioned several other database programs which could be used for the same purpose.

A concern was raised that low-income providers won't reach the highest level, since there are training costs involved. Presenters at the conference stressed that agencies will need to be vigilant about the needs of low-income families and seek out funds to enable all providers to attain the highest level.

*All 700 family child care providers in the Action for Children registry have provided their credentials which are communicated to parents to help them make a more informed choice.*

## ACTION FOR CHILDREN
## COLUMBUS, OHIO
## FAMILY HOME CHILD CARE PROVIDER TIERS

### TIER 1

- Meets minimum health and safety standards.
- Has police record check.
- Receives at lease one annual home visit.

### TIER 2

- Meets minimum health and safety standards.
- Has BCI (Bureau of Criminal Investigation) check.
- Receives at least two annual home visits.
- Has had a certified fire and health inspection.
- Is required to have a minimum of two hours of early childhood education/training annually.

### TIER 3

- Meets minimum health and safety standards.
- Has BCI (Bureau of Criminal Investigation) check.
- Receives at least two annual home visits.
- Has had a certified fire and health inspection.
- Has had a minimum of 30 hours* of professional education/training including CPR and First Aid.

### TIER 4

- Meets minimum health and safety standards.
- Has BCI (Bureau of Criminal Investigation) check.
- Receives at least two annual home visits.
- Has had a certified fire and health inspection.
- Has had a minimum of 30 hours* of professional education/training.
- Has had at least 18 months or more of experience in child care.
- Takes at least six hours of professional education annually.
- Has current First Aid and CPR certification.

* The following home provider credentials qualify for 30 hours of training:
  - 2- or 4-year degree with a minimum of 30 hours in child development or related field.
  - Workshops that meet the Ohio Department of Human Services training requirements for home providers.
  - Child Development Associate (CDA) home based credential.
  - Completed Family-to-Family (30 hour course with Action for Children).
  - American Montessori credential.

## NAFCC refines accreditation

At the heart of the Child Care Aware efforts to improve child care is the **National Association for Family Child Care's accreditation.** Over half of all the accredited family child care homes in the nation have been assisted by Child Care Aware. After extensive experience with the NAFCC model, the child care community has seen the need to refine the accreditation process to better support families and caregivers. Kathy Modigliani reported on the collaborative review process underway, which will lead to a 1998 launch of the new accreditation.

Parents and providers are working together in over 50 community work groups to develop a consensus in the field on quality family child care. The goals are to develop common language to explain early childhood concepts and to develop an accreditation process that is less intimidating to providers. What has come out of the work groups is a conceptual commitment to have family child care home accreditation equivalent in quality to NAEYC accreditation and CDA credentialed teachers.

The revised NAFCC accreditation will have an increased emphasis on the quality of provider relationships with children, parents, extended families and the provider's own family; and the relationships among the children. The group is debating how to measure meaningful play, how to be more accepting of "homey" homes that are less "school-like," and how to define and assess cultural sensitivity. The challenge is to accommodate diversity while respecting what research says about child development.

## What makes accreditation projects work for providers?

**Alison Lutton, Delaware Valley AEYC, Philadelphia** and **Onda Maughan, a family child care leader in Chicago,** gave concrete examples of successful accreditation projects. In both projects, family child care providers have leadership roles as mentors, trainers and advisors. Elements include:

- peer support groups offered to everyone throughout the process;
- meetings held in accredited homes;
- mentors and advisors meet across culture and neighborhood lines to learn from one another;
- frequent phone contacts among peers and advisors;
- accredited providers trained to become consumer educators; and
- providers seen as potential leaders in the early childhood community.

*There is a conceptual commitment to have family child care home accreditation equivalent in quality to NAEYC accreditation and CDA credentialed teachers.*

*Chicago has developed a mentorship guild; after four years, 50 of an original 59 members are still involved.*

## Snapshots: Family Child Care Training and Professional Development

**The Child Care Resource & Referral project, Del Ray, Florida,** had experienced difficulty getting providers into training, until they developed **provider-led training** in providers' homes, with hands-on work in accreditation and CDA. In addition to training in developmentally appropriate practice, they do weekly homework and journalizing to help them internalize what they are learning. Eighteen have graduated; five want to pursue accreditation.

**Developing an infrastructure** with tiers of providers: **Action for Children, Columbus, Ohio,** where there is no state licensing of family child care, developed a four-level tier system for all providers in the database. The highest level requires more than 30 hours of training. The **Family-to-Family Project in Nashville, Tennessee,** is also building the infrastructure for professional development with a tiering system for providers in which the highest tier requires accreditation. **Child Care Dallas, Dallas, Texas,** is seeking funding for a tier above accreditation, to be called "Homes Apart." These providers will prepare portfolios, mentor those going through accreditation, use their programs as lab school settings, and be encouraged to serve on boards.

**Mentoring** has been an exciting way to enrich professional development. The **Family-to-Family Project at Austin Families, Inc., Austin, Texas,** combined with AEYC and a family child care association for an effective partnership. Mentors come together every six weeks and design training for themselves. Chicago has developed a mentorship guild; after four years, 50 of an original 59 members are still involved. The project has been relocated to **Metropolitan Chicago Association for the Education of Young Children.**

**Child Care Resources in Bellevue, Washington** has developed a **group accreditation project**, with a two-year advanced training program. It is a highly replicable model, which gives providers opportunities to become trainers. It has led to an increase in accredited and CDA credentialed providers and links to a community college. Response has been outstanding; instead of the 20 students projected to enroll, they had 60.

## Family child care providers become leaders

Child Care Aware projects have created many opportunities for individuals to develop skills as trainers, mentors, and association leaders. Accreditation and other training projects have also brought leadership opportunities to family child care associations. **Deborah Clark Crabtree, Riverside County Office of Education, Children's Services Unit, Riverside, California,** described the **growth of a very successful association**. She attributed much of the success to using Family-to-Family graduates as training facilitators. Now half the trainers are providers and all trainings are facilitated by licensed family child care providers who get stipends. When Family-to-Family began, there were five regional family child care associations in the county, all of which became non-profits. Crabtree reported that four of the associations united this year to form one association. They have taken over the responsibility for the initial Family-to-Family training and will be doing intermediate training as well.

## Associations experience developmental stages

The new organization in Riverside County has gone through four stages in its teamwork development, according to Crabtree, who described the four stages as "forming, storming, norming, and performing." In the forming stage there were very strong women coming together with separate associations and boards. The "storming" began when some had to relinquish leadership roles in the single association. In the last eight months they have had conflict resolution and leadership training. Training on personality styles, the value of each style and working together was a turning point. Crabtree's current assessment is that the association is at the norming stage and will soon be performing.

Members of the audience affirmed the value of training in coalition building, and in identifying personality profiles within organizations they had worked with. Carol Maurer and her agency, 4C of Milwaukee County, Wisconsin, has been involved with a developing family child care association and identifies three stages in the relationship between the association and her CCR&R agency. Both the agency and the association develop different roles during the process.

*Four stages of teamwork development: "forming, storming, norming, and performing."*

**DEVELOPMENTAL STAGES OF A RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN A CCR&R AGENCY AND A FAMILY CHILD CARE ASSOCIATION**

**4C of Milwaukee County, Milwaukee, Wisconsin**

| | |
|---|---|
| Stage One: | • 4C provided staff; produced the association newsletter.<br>• 4C assumed clerical duties.<br>• 4C helped plan meeting agendas.<br>• 4C provided financial assistance for a conference, general meetings, printing and postage. |
| Stage Two: | • 4C continued financial support.<br>• Newsletter was produced by the providers.<br>• The executive committee developed a policies and procedures manual which was approved by the board.<br>• The president took over more leadership.<br>• 4C communicates information about state and national child care issues to the association. |
| Stage Three: | • The association had its own 501c3.<br>• 4C and the association became collaborative partners.<br>• Activities had to become mutually beneficial, with formal, written, signed collaborative agreements.<br>• It became important to share the credit for events equally. |

## TOOLS TO USE WITH ASSOCIATIONS:
## PERSONALITY PROFILE EXERCISES AND TESTS

**Michael W. Maughan, Ph.D., Chicago, Illinois**

**Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI)**

| | |
|---|---|
| Purpose: | Measures personality dispositions and interests. |
| Description: | 166- or 126-item test of four aspects of personality: Introversion-Extroversion, Sensing-Intuition, Thinking-Feeling, and Judging-Perceiving. |
| Cost: | Kit includes manual, key, background information, 5 tests, 25 answer sheets: $27.50. |

**Personal Profile System: 2800 Series (DISC)**

| | |
|---|---|
| Purpose: | Assesses behavior related to job or personality. |
| Uses: | Useful to match individuals to positions or to better understand characteristics of co-workers/team members. |
| Description: | Multiple-item test in two parts for assessing and matching people. Only the second part is used for teams . Measures four dimensions: Dominance, Influence, Conscientiousness, and Steadiness. |
| Cost: | Personality Profile form approximately $12.00. |

**Fundamental Interpersonal Relations Orientation-Behavior (FIRO-B)**

| | |
|---|---|
| Purpose: | Measures an individual's characteristic behavior toward others. |
| Uses: | Executive development programs and as a measure of compatibility in relationships. |
| Description: | 54 item test measuring six dimensions of behavior toward others: Expressed Inclusion, Expressed Control, Expressed Affection, Wanted Inclusion, Wanted Control, and Wanted Affection. |
| Cost: | Test and key, $3.25; 25 tests, $5.00. |

*Training on personality styles, the value of each style and working together was a turning point.*

# III. Consumer Education

## Parents speak about selecting child care

*Kathy Modigliani described distressful feelings such as guilt; fear that some harm might come to their child; loss and sorrow when they leave their children; and sorrow over missing a good part of their children's childhoods. She reported that mothers also feel jealous or insecure about the intimacy between their children and the caregivers.*

**Kathy Modigliani, Wheelock College Family Child Care Project** reported on the results of her analysis of Child Care Aware parent focus groups. Modigliani described the intensity of feelings that parents expressed about choosing child care for the first time, saying that powerful emotions are stirred up as mothers leave their children with strangers in unfamiliar settings. She described distressful feelings such as guilt; fear that some harm might come to their child; loss and sorrow when they leave their children; and sorrow over missing a good part of their children's childhoods. She reported that mothers also feel jealous or insecure about the intimacy between their children and the caregivers.

**THE NEED FOR CONSUMER AWARENESS:**

***Parents Speak About Child Care***

**Kathy Modigliani, Wheelock College Family Child Care Project**

It is probably true that the average family puts more energy into buying a car than they do in choosing a child care arrangement. They think about features they want and shop around, searching for the best combination of price and value. (Modigliani, 1996, p. 70)

Parents lack knowledge about child development. Parents need to learn more about how to differentiate between good child care and bad child care.(p.70)

Parents get more than they know or pay for in good child care. Consumer education and public education will be required to help parents demand high quality. (p.71)

Mothers are often sophisticated in their intuition,...they usually identify criticisms or appreciation that are in fact well-grounded in child development and early education theory. They need to be encouraged to trust their intuition. (p.71)

## Some mothers feel anguished

*Mothers in the focus groups seemed "shocked" when choosing to put babies in child care.*

According to Modigliani, mothers in the focus groups seemed "shocked" when choosing to put babies in child care, and they experienced the same feelings over again in finding school age child care. They had difficulty imagining their children in such settings. This was particularly true of white middle class families, in contrast to low-income and all African American mothers, who had seen their own mothers work. For them working was normal. This generation of middle class families, over half of whom had mothers at home, feel they are "pioneers," without role models. (Some provider/trainers have reported that they are starting to provide care for the children of former charges, and that this second generation of parents see the providers like a grandma, which brings trust to the relationship.)

**Challenge:**

- Recognize the ambivalent feelings of some mothers.

**Strategies:**

- Support the feelings, but give the facts. "I know you are feeling anguished, but we do know that good child care is good for kids."
- Engage more fathers in becoming involved in the child care search and maintenance.

*One typical comment was "How can I trust a stranger?"*

## Parents worry about trust

When parents were asked about their child care search, the underlying theme was trust. They worried what might happen; how emergencies would be handled; and they expressed fear about "other people" raising their child. One typical comment was "How can I trust a stranger?" Mothers demonstrated a very real fear of "snatching" or sexual molestation. Lower-income moms are more concerned about sexual abuse, some saying that they would never place their child in a program where there was a man. They expressed concern that they were losing control of their influence; they didn't know how their children would turn out after being cared for by others.

**Challenges:**

- Figure out how to get more information to parent.
- Create sense of trustworthiness about CCR&R.
- Help caregivers convey a deep, true, sense of trust.
- Figure out ways to set a mother's mind at ease.

**Strategies:**

- Hold classes for parents in the workplace with co-workers.
- Teach parents how to learn to trust, and how to learn.
- Have providers give parents tours of homes and open all the doors.
- Have caregivers develop more detailed descriptions in CCR&R program.
- Help CCR&R counselors understand parent's fears.
- Help providers communicate that they really want parents to drop in.
- Counteract media's exploitation of fears about child care.

*According to Duff, "tips" on finding child care aren't useful if you don't recognize how you learn and trust your self.*

### HELPING PARENTS LEARN HOW TO CHOOSE GOOD CHILD CARE

At **Crystal Stairs in Los Angeles, Alice Walker Duff** and staff have come to believe that parents need to learn to trust themsleves so that they can learn how to select good child care. CCR&Rs provide information to parents. Some can use it and take it and run, but others really don't know how to use the information. According to Duff, "tips" on finding child care aren't useful if you don't recognize how you learn and trust your self.

The following questions ease the learning process:

"How have you learned in the past?"

"When was the last time you learned something that was of great value to you?"

"How did that come about? What happened?"

Parents will then come to discover how it is they learn. Then we ask, "Do you want to learn something important about child care?" This helps the parent focus on how they learn and how they can use and trust information, based on their past experience.

## Affordability

*Low-income families spend 21% to 35% of their income on child care.*

In the United States there is a two-class system of child care. Low-income families spend 21% to 35% of their income on child care. Low-income moms said that all they could afford were programs with the TV on all day. They were wistful about better child care, but they couldn't afford it. Modigliani expressed the concern that low-income families are not only buying second-class child care but also making sacrifices on food and housing, which also affect the health and well-being of the children.

**Challenge:**

- Part of improving quality is to stop protecting upper-income parents from paying more.

**Strategies:**

- The cheapest way would be the U.S. military child care model, where everyone pays on a sliding fee scale based on income, and providers are paid on the basis of experience and education, with the military making up the difference.

- Another way would be "universal coverage", making child care an entitlement like public education, moving it from five to four to three year old children over the next 50 years.

## Parent and provider relationships

*There is a mutual lack of respect between caregivers and moms who use infant/toddler care.*

Modigliani reported that although parents expressed interest in getting to know other parents in the child care setting, they generally want quick reports on their children and little program involvement beyond that. Mothers seemed too busy to take interest in the caregiver. Caregivers in turn were concerned about the lack of respect they felt from parents. Adding to the stress on the parent/caregiver relationship is the fact that more than half of caregivers think that moms should be at home with infants and toddlers. So there is a mutual lack of respect between caregivers and moms who use infant/toddler care.

**Challenges:**

- Parents and caregivers often resent one another.
- Women's work and ways of caring are not respected in our society.
- Where are the fathers?

**Strategies:**

- Rethink parent education to develop fathers as a constituency.
- Train providers on how to support parents and their cultural values.
- Form parent groups to participate in provider training with panels and structured interactions.
- Encourage providers to hold family events two or three times a year.
- Rethink developmental stages of caregivers and explore other ways in which we are set up to compete with one another so that we understand that it's okay to be in different places in our lives. (It's okay to work; it's okay to be a caregiver.)
- Use the accreditation process to focus on parent/provider partnerships.

## Reaching parents at different stages

*The CCR&R had to learn about low-income families, and find ways other than sending brochures about quality child care to reach stressed parents .*

Some of the most important work of Child Care Aware has been to test pilot projects and learn what works in consumer education. One project at **Programs for Parents in Verona, New Jersey, targeted parents-in-waiting with messages on quality**. The CCR&R agency had been very comfortable working with middle-class suburban families, until their clientele changed with the voucher program. They had to learn about low-income families, and find ways other than sending brochures about quality child care to reach stressed parents . They discovered that parents often came

*Parents had four worries about their child care:*

- *their children play too much and are not learning;*
- *their children are not learning to read by age four;*
- *their children are not learning math; and*
- *their children will not be ready for kindergarten.*

to the CCR&R after they had already made their decision about a provider. Of necessity, convenience and cost were the most important elements of their selection, but quality was not. Also, for those who had selected care with relatives or neighbors, it was awkward to consider changing the arrangements should they become dissatisfied. The agency decided to target parents before they had children to educate them about quality child care. Parents didn't know how to recognize quality child care, and didn't understand the importance of trained caregivers. Some conferees wondered if the field needs to give more attention to helping parents who are ambivalent about child care to explore options about staying at home longer before returning to work.

**Programs for Parents** was successful because:

- They had a very diverse, grass roots advisory board.
- They collaborated with hospitals, retailers, and pediatricians to reach pregnant women and new parents.
- They used continuous videos, bus signs, radio and TV PSAs.
- They made sure that the video gave parents clear images of what quality child care looks like.
- They incorporated the quality messages into CCR&R training so that counselors reinforced the message.

Another Child Care Aware project aimed its **consumer education efforts to parents who had already chosen child care**. The staff at **Initiatives for Children, Houston, Texas** had been surprised by the lack of understanding about quality child care held by parents in their Corporate H.A.N.D.S. project. Most parents had no idea that their center had been selected or had received new equipment to improve child care quality. They did not seem aware that more attention given to a child means higher quality care. Therefore, Initiatives for Children targeted this group for a consumer education project. The goals were to help parents:

- increase demand for quality child care;
- become aware of indicators of quality child care;
- understand that training leads to quality; and
- know that their employers were helping to improve child care.

Through a survey of 1500 parents working in corporations, and through parent meetings at child care programs, they learned that parents had four worries about their child care:

- their children play too much and are not learning;
- their children are not learning to read by age four;
- their children are not learning math; and
- their children will not be ready for kindergarten.

**Initiatives for Children** converted these worries into the topics for four newsletters. For example, one edition promoted the importance of play, catching the parents' attention by asking, "Do you want your child to love school? Child care can help you meet your goal through play." The agency also conducted 50 parent meetings in child care centers and homes, reaching over 300 parents. The meetings were held at 5:30 or 6:30 p.m. with free child care, a light supper, and an opportunity to help decide how to use $500 per family child care home or $2,000 per center to improve child care quality. The project will conduct a final survey to see if parents know more about quality child care and if they are more involved in their child care settings.

One challenge which has not been addressed by this project is how to help families who aren't happy with the quality of child care available to them. At several points in the conference the issue of parent involvement and parent organizing was raised as a difficult challenge which demands staff time and financial resources to adequately address. Parent Voices is a model which could be replicated if financial resources were available.

**LESSONS LEARNED FROM PARENT VOICES**

**Crystal Stairs, Inc.**

**Los Angeles, California**

The goal of the **Parent Voices/Child Care Aware** project is to develop a skilled group of parent advocates who are astute and careful consumers of child care services; and who are prepared to organize other parents in a child care advocacy movement. Educating parents on child care issues and the child care system is a central part of the project. What follows are some of the lessons learned through Parent Voices over the course of the last two years.

- Because child care is so complex, it is crucial that education of parents is done in an engaging, ongoing, interactive, and interpersonal way, rather than solely through short-term, sporadic efforts.
- It is necessary to have full-time, committed staff with experience in organizing.
- It is important for the parents to be able to identify with staff and vice-versa.
- It is essential that sufficient time and sufficient money be dedicated to the project, because there is no such thing as organizing part time.

*The issue of parent involvement and parent organizing was raised as a difficult challenge.*

*"Child care is more than graham crackers and a nap" and "School-age child care: growing up with someplace to go."*
*Washington State Early Childhood 2000 Campaign*

## Snapshots:
## Consumer and Public Education

Child Care Aware communities are gaining expertise in consumer education. They are exploring opportunities to understand parents as consumers. **Initiatives for Children, Houston, Texas**, through their Corporate H.A.N.D.S. Project, held parent meetings to learn what concerns parents have about their child care. Parents reported being worried that their children four years and younger are not learning, that they are not able to read by age 4, and that they are not doing math and other structured educational activities in child care.

**North Valley Family-to-Family, the City of Sunnyvale, California,** developed a project in partnership with a community college and employer sponsors to produce a television program featuring accredited family child care homes and centers. The program will demonstrate how to find child care and how to develop a relationship with a child care provider. One hundred copies of the tape will be produced and distributed in all area libraries and CCR&R agencies. The half hour show will be aired in March 1997 in prime time evening and day. Copies will be given to Chinese and Spanish stations for translation and airing.

In **Washington State, the Early Childhood 2000 Campaign** promotes a vision of universal appreciation for quality child care, that nurtures, educates and supports families. The project intends to influence public opinion about child care so that it will be perceived as nurturing and educational, instead of merely custodial. They want the public to understand that training, accreditation, and compensation are components of quality. This ambitious model has targeted four audiences: consumers, public policy makers, business leaders, and child care providers. They have taken a multimedia approach, using the collective voice of authority from a broad-based collaborative. A statewide 800 number links consumers with local resources. The two messages which caught people's attention were "Child care is more than graham crackers and a nap" and "School-age child care: growing up with someplace to go."

The **Family-to-Family project in Chicago** set aside $36,000 per year for three years to generate a public awareness campaign. With the help of a professional public relations firm, the project attracted publicity for special events; developed print materials such as posters, bus cards, and gift bags for providers: and placed PSA's, cable stories; and hundreds of print placements as follow-ups to child care stories identified in local media. The staff estimates that they have received $1.2 million value in advertising over three years for their investment. Project staff attribute their success to the consistency and availability afforded by a professional public relations firm.

## Public Engagement Opportunity

**Nina Sazer O'Donnell, Families and Work Institute,** described the unprecedented collaboration between Hollywood, the early childhood field and funders on a national public engagement campaign to promote the importance of the early years. A prime-time television special with major stars will kick off the Early Childhood Public Engagement Campaign in April 1997. Imbedded in the entertainment will be four mini-documentaries about brain development, the role of parents, the role of quality child care, and family-friendly communities. O'Donnell challenged the field to take this rare opportunity to discover new allies and work across fields and domains. A coalition of 45 state and national organizations are planning to use the television program as a launch to promote the importance of early childhood development.

The campaign raises a number of challenges which the conferees discussed. One challenge raised by O'Donnell is developing ways to measure change after the public engagement campaign. Others were concerned that it not be limited to a parent-child issue, but rather that it is framed as a community commitment to support families. Families and Work Institute is also interested in identifying ways that family child care can participate and benefit.

There is a concern in the field that film and television has a terrible record of playing to stereotypes, and that someone has to be sure that they don't play on stereotypes of low-income, black or Hispanic parents. The message should be that love for children looks different in different communities. Conferees suggested that Bill Cosby, James Comer, Alicia Lieberman, and the National Black Child Development Institute should be involved to ensure a respect for all families.

### PUBLIC AWARENESS OPPORTUNITY: THE EARLY CHILDHOOD PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT CAMPAIGN

**GOALS:**

- Increase public awareness of the importance of the first three years of life;
- connect families with local resources that help them to promote their young children's healthy development and school readiness, and
- build a public will to make such resources available throughout the country.

**WHO:**

An unusual collaboration among Hollywood, early childhood advocates, and funders under the leadership of Ellen Galinsky and Nina Sazer O'Donnell from the Families and Work Institute.

**WHAT:**

A major Public Engagement Campaign to infuse knowledge about brain development to families and communities across the nation. There will be a prime time television special on ABC TV with musical and comedy entertainment from major stars such as Robin Williams.
Interspersed within the program will be mini-documentaries on child development, the role of parents, and the role of quality child care. The campaign will also feature a special issue of Newsweek magazine devoted entirely to early childhood education; a special edition of Sesame Street Parents magazine, in Spanish and English; a national 800 number to link callers to local resources; and a video and CD-ROM for parents, available in public libraries.

**WHEN:**

April 1997

**STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITIES:**

The campaign represents new allies and new opportunities to work with other professional groups such as the American Library Association, the American Academy of Pediatrics, First Book, the American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences, and the National Association of Police Chiefs.

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## Working with the media in public/parent outreach

**Barbara Reisman, Child Care Action Campaign,** and **Anne Nicolai, Child Care Aware,** presented strategies for working with the media. In order to do this, it's important that we understand the reporter's role, which is to report news and important trends. According to Reisman, our job is to help the reporter decide what's important and see all sides of the story. The early childhood field needs to decide what our message is and how to deliver it.

According to Nicolai, the quality of family life is becoming a very important story, and child care is a big part of that. There is now a journalism center on families and children that urges papers and television to adopt family and children beats. This presents opportunities to get media attention through family sensitive news spots on television, parenting columns, and special publications. However, child care professionals also have to link the child care issue with other stories.

*When the Child Care Action Campaign conducted research on public opinion and media coverage, its fundamental finding was that child care doesn't stand on its own as an issue.*

When the Child Care Action Campaign conducted research on public opinion and media coverage, its fundamental finding was that child care doesn't stand on its own as an issue. It has to be connected with other national priorities. Welfare reform is at the top of the newsworthy list. Child care professionals succeeded in communicating the message that welfare reform won't work without child care. It translated into the final version of the legislation containing more money for child care. Now the next step is to help all families, particularly low-income families, get access to child care so that parents can get and keep jobs in the new environment. Child care professionals need to expand the frame to include the message that **children need good quality child care to grow and thrive.**

We can link our issue with others:

- Child care is important for children to be successful learners.
- Child care is important to support families; it reinforces family values.
- There is new information that the fastest brain development occurs during age 0 to age 3. Appropriate caregiving is needed to nurture and support that development. We can't "fix" it later.

The child care field has also learned through Ad Council research that people are turned off by messages that have shocking statistics, or present systems (schools, child care) as failing. People want to know what works and how to take action. These are our messages:

- We all face challenges.
- Families try to get over challenges.
- People want to be self reliant; help is reciprocal.
- The need for support is temporary, episodic.
- Parenting is an important, tough job. We all need support.
- Programs work.

We have a good opportunity to get our primary message across:

***Child care supports parents in a tough job to become self-reliant.***

## TIPS FOR GETTING THE CHILD CARE MESSAGE ACROSS

**Anne Nicolai, Child Care Aware**

1. Keep a local media list up-to-date.
2. Invite media to lunch to let them know what you do.
3. Empathize with the reporter; it's not easy to learn about unfamiliar topics and to present all sides of an issue.
4. Clarify your message and keep repeating it.
5. Link national stories to local issues, events and resources.
6. Become listed as the local expert on child care.
7. Keep names of families willing to talk with a reporter and then be there at the interview to help them feel at ease.
8. Availability is the courtesy you extend. Have the home phone number and pager available for your agency's spokesperson.
9. Have news clips, standard responses to standard questions, and key people's home phone numbers so that whenever a reporter calls, staff can respond quickly.
10. Build and maintain your relationships with people in the media .

*Our primary message:*
***Child care supports parents in a tough job to become self-reliant.***

# IV. Conclusion

## Successes we can build on

Child Care Aware has provided the child care field with research and eight years of experience in building the infrastructure to improve child care. Communities can learn from the successes of these projects to increase the number of accredited child care providers, develop increased opportunities for professional development of family child care providers, and build community coalitions to educate the public about the value of quality child care. In addition to brief presentations, project leaders contributed to a community profile handbook which includes service data, the ethnic and socio-economic composition of the community, and the family child care picture in regulations and training resources. Projects included Family-to-Family child care training sites, replication projects, and consumer education projects.

Conferees also shared the lessons learned in their communities and raised issues related to welfare reform and to consumer perceptions of child care. The mismatch between what the field recognizes as child care quality in training, accreditation and developmentally appropriate practice and what consumers accept as good child care is a significant challenge. Pilot projects funded by Child Care Aware have made a major contribution to the field in testing models to address these challenges. The experiences of these projects will translate into replicated models across the country and will provide a learning base for the new Child Care Aware focus on the child care consumer marketplace.

*The experiences of these projects will translate into replicated models across the country and will provide a learning base for the new Child Care Aware focus on the child care consumer marketplace.*

**CHILD CARE AWARE CONFERENCE**

**October 9-11, 1996**

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